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SECRET/SENSITIVE

OLC 71-2080

2 December 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversations with Messrs. Woodruff, Slatinshek and Chairman Mahon re Intelligence Budget

1. Today, Colonel White and I met separately with Bill Woodruff, Counsel, Senate Appropriations Committee, Frank Slatinshek, Assistant Chief Counsel, House Armed Services Committee, and Chairman George Mahon, House Appropriations Committee on the above subject. On each occasion Colonel White explained that the Director had been urged by Chairmen Stennis and Ellender, Senate Armed Services and Senate Appropriations Committees, to move quickly to get the intelligence budgets transferred to accounts not involving the authorization process. He said there was some lack of clarity as to the extent to which these instructions covered the entire community budget, but obviously this could not be done at once, and the immediate problem was to get all of the CIA budget out of the authorization process for FY 1973.

2. Mr. Woodruff commented that the Agency would be better off if its entire budget was made public as a single line item. He argued if this was done the five present members of the Appropriations Subcommittee could protect us, but otherwise we might have to rely on a committee of some twenty members with the resulting problems of maintaining tight security. Colonel White replied that some day we might have to make our budget public but we wanted to put this off as long as possible fearing that once the total was revealed, efforts would be made to break it down into components. Woodruff also argued that if Congress wished to they could extend the authorization requirement to cover any appropriations they wished simply by amending P. L. 412, and this was a likely possibility if Congress became particularly concerned about how much was being spent on intelligence. Woodruff said he had discussed the matter with Ralph Preston, Staff Assistant, House Appropriations Committee, and he indicated that he would try to cooperate in obtaining our objectives.

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3. When the matter was presented to Mr. Slatinshek, he expressed some misgivings, conceding that he was speaking as the devil's advocate. He argued that our proposal would accomplish only a temporary solution to the problem at best. He also questioned whether Chairman Nedzi, of the new Intelligence Subcommittee, might not feel that, by avoiding the authorization process, we were cutting out some of his present authority. Colonel White emphasized that we would of course be more than glad to discuss our budget with Nedzi's Subcommittee at any time, regardless of whether their authorization was required.

4. When we met Chairman Mahon, he was quite rushed and our conversation with him was extremely brief. His initial reaction was over which accounts,not requiring authorization, could cover the Agency budget. He also remarked that he was not sure where our proposal would lead but he would be glad to work with us. Meanwhile, he asked us to see Ralph Preston (presently out of town) when he returns Monday morning.

[redacted]

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Legislative Counsel

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